

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 07339 141333Z

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S E C R E T KINSHASA 7339

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, CG, AO

SUBJECT: GOZ ON ANGOLAN/ZAIRIAN RELATIONS

REF: KINSHASA 7307

SUMMARY: MOBUTU WILL SEND DELEGATION TO BRAZZAVILLE FOR TALKS WITH ANGOLANS BUT IS PROFOUNDLY SKEPTICAL REGARDING ANGOLANS' ABILITY TO ACCEPT PRINCIPLE OF VERIFICATION ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER. END SUMMARY.

1. AMBASSADOR CUTLER AND AF/C DIRECTOR JUNIOR MET AGAIN WITH PRESIDENT MOBUTU MORNING JULY 14 TO CONTINUE DISCUSSION OF ZAIRE'S RELATIONS WITH ANGOLA. MOBUTU OPENED WITH THE NEWS THAT THE ANGOLAN CHARGE D'AFFAIRES IN BRAZZAVILLE HAD CONTACTED ZAIRE'S AMBASSADOR THERE JULY 13 TO INFORM HIM THAT ANGOLA WAS PREPARED TO RESUME TALKS WITH ZAIRE JULY 17 AND THAT AN ANGOLAN NEGOTIATING TEAM WOULD ARRIVE IN BRAZZAVILLE JULY 16.

2. RESPONDING THAT HE HAD UNDERSTOOD THAT THE ANGOLAN DELEGATION WOULD BOTH ARRIVE AND BE PREPARED TO BEGIN TALKS IN BRAZZAVILLE ON SUNDAY, JUNIOR THEN REPLAYED FOR MOBUTU WHAT HE HAD TOLD LUVUALU AND NASCIMENTO IN LUANDA JULY 12;

--THAT MOBUTU REMAINED WILLING TO WORK TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS, STARTING WITH REDUCTION OF TENSION ALONG THE BORDER

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 KINSHA 07339 141333Z

THROUGH A SYSTEM OF NEUTRAL VERIFICATION ON BOTH SIDES;

--THAT THE CONGOLESE GOVERNMENT WAS ACCEPTABLE TO THE GOZ AS A MEDIATOR;

--THAT PRESIDENT MOBUTU WAS WILLING TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO BRAZZAVILLE BEFORE THE OAU SUMMIT IN KHARTOUM TO RESUME TALKS; AND

--THAT HE WAS WILLING TO MEET WITH NETO IN KHARTOUM.

NODDING AGREEMENT, MOBUTU SAID HE NOW UNDERSTOOD THAT NASCIMENTO, NOT NETO, WOULD ATTEND THE KHARTOUM SUMMIT.

3. JUNIOR TURNED TO THE ANGOLAN RESPONSE (REFTEL), SAYING THAT THEY FOUND MOBUTU'S CONCEPT OF A "NEUTRAL ZONE" ALONG THE BORDER A GOOD ONE, BUT THAT THE GOZ WOULD ALSO HAVE TO DISMANTLE THE UNITA, FNLA, AND FLEC ORGANIZATIONS IN ZAIRE. JUNIOR ADDED THAT WHEN HE PRESSED LUVUALU FOR DETAILS, LUVUALU REPLIED SOMEWHAT VAGUELY THAT ZAIRE MUST CLOSE THE OFFICES OF THOSE ORGANIZATIONS IN ZAIRE. MOBUTU ASSERTED THAT THERE WERE NO SUCH OFFICES, AT LEAST NONE OF WHICH HE WAS AWARE, AND THAT THIS QUESTINN WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE ONE FOR THE VERIFICATION TEAM HE HAD PROPOSED.

4. COMPLETING HIS ACCUNT OF THE ANGOLAN RESPONSE, JUNIOR REPORTED THAT THEY DID NOT ENVISAGE THE FORTHCOMING BRAZZAVILLE MEETING AS INVOLVING THE ZAIRIAN-ANGOLAN MIXED COMMISSION, BUT RATHER AS ONE RESPONSIVE TO MOBUTU'S MESSAGE ON BORDER ISSUES. MOBUTU EMPHATICALLY EXPRESSED HIS CONVICTION THAT THE ANGOLANS WILL NEVER ACCEPT A VERIFICATION TEAM ON THEIR SIDE OF THE BORDER. HE ADDED THAT IN THE WAKE OF KOLWEZI HE HAD CONSIDERED EARLIER ZAMBIAN AND CONGOLESE ATTEMPTS AT MEDIATION AS PROVOCATION, AND THAT HIS FAILURE TO RESPOND HAD LED THE ANGOLANS TO BELIEVE HE WOULD CONTINUE TO REJECT ANY OVERTURES. NOW HE "HAD THEM" BY RESPONDING FAVORABLY. MOBUTU WENT ON TO ASSERT THAT THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS WERE PRESSURING ANGOLA TO BE CONCILIATORY IN ORDER TO AVOID CONDEMNATION FIRST AT KHARTOUM AND LATER AT THE BELGRADE AND HAVANA NON-ALIGNED MEETINGS.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 KINSHA 07339 141333Z

HE VIEWED SUCH GESTURES AS NETO'S RECENT LE MONDE INTERVIEW MORE AS DECEPTION THAN AS SERIOUS MOVES.

5. JUNIOR OFFERED HIS PERSONAL IMPRESSION THAT THE ANGOLANS HAD SEEMED TO BE GENUINELY CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR SECURITY FROM EXTERNAL AGGRESSION. THEY HAD IN ANY EVENT, NOT SO FAR REJECTED THE PRINCIPLE OF VERIFICATION. MOBUTU REITERATED THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THE ANGOLANS WOULD GO ALONG, BUT HE WOULD "PLAY THE GAME" AND TAKE IT AS FAR AS IT WOULD GO.

6. AMB CUTLER SUGGESTED THAT A POSSIBLE OBSTACLE DURING PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF THE MIXED COMMISSION HAD BEEN AN OVERLOADED AGENDA. AN EXCLUSIVE FOCUS THIS TIME ON PROBLEMS ALONG THE ZAIRE-ANGOLA BORDER MIGHT ALLOW FOR GREATER PROGRESS BY PERMITTING A STEP-BY-STEP RATHER THAN ALL-OR-NOTHING APPROACH. MOBUTU JOKINGLY REPLIED THAT THERE WOULD IN FACT BE TWO AGENDA ITEMS, THE FIRST BEING A JOINT DECLARATION OF TRUST IN THE US AS A DEFENDER OF HUMAN RIGHTS. HE THEN NOTED IN PASSING THAT HE HAD INFORMED THE ZAIRIAN NEWS AGENCY (AZAP) OF THE ANGOLAN CHARGE'S DEMARCHE AND OF HIS ACCEPTANCE, AND THAT ADMIRAL LOMPONDA (THE STONY-FACED HEAD OF THE ZAIRIAN DELEGATION TO THE MIXED COMMISSION) WAS READY TO TRAVEL TO BRAZZAVILLE AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE. RETURNING AGAIN TO

THE THEME OF ANGOLAN INSINCERITY, MOBUTU EMPHASIZED THAT HE INTENDS TO TAKE WHAT THEY SAY QUITE LITERALLY AND PURSUE IT SKEPTICALLY BUT SINCERELY AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.

7. JUNIOR CONCLUDED HIS PRESENTATION BY INFORMING MOBUTU OF HIS INTENTION TO VISIT BRAZZAVILLE BEFORE RETURNING TO WASHINGTON, HE ASKED MOBUTU IF HE WOULD OBJECT TO HIS BRIEFING THE CONGOLESE ON THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAY. MOBUTU ASSURED HIM OF THE CONTRARY, ADDING THAT, "I'LL GO AS FAR AS THE ANGOLANS". IF IT PROVED NECESSARY TO EXPEL ROBERTO FROM ZAIRE, AND ANGOLA WAS WILLING TO EXPEL MBUMBA, HE WOULD DO SO. THE MEETING CONCLUDED WITH A FINAL PLUG BY THE AMB IN FAVOR OF PATIENT, STEP-BY-STEP NEGOTIATIONS, LEADING TO AN INCREASED SENSE OF SECURITY ON BOTH SIDES THROUGH DECREASED TENSION.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 KINSHA 07339 141333Z

8. COMMENT: IT IS EVIDENT MOBUTU STILL HAS LITTLE CONFIDENCE IN LUANDA'S INTENTIONS AND DOES NOT EXPECT MUCH FROM THE BRAZZAVILLE MEETING. HIS DECISION TO REVEAL PLANS FOR MEETING TO THE PRESS REFLECTS HIS SUSPICIONS AND HIS CONCERN FOR ZAIRE'S PUBLIC POSTURE VIS-A-VIS THAT OF ITS ADVERSARY, PARTICULARLY ON THE EVE OF THE KHARTOUM SUMMIT. WHILE THERE IS OBVIOUSLY RISK THAT BRAZZAVILLE TALKS WILL AGAIN FLOP, MOBUTU AT LEAST UNDERSTANDS THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACHE TO REOPENING A DIALOGUE AND OUR VIEW THAT GRADUAL APPROACH, WITH INITIAL FOCUS ON IMMEDIATE PROBLEM OF BORDER SECURITY, SEEMS TO OFFER BEST CHANCE FOR SUCCESS.

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